Handout 1: Primary Source Documents about the Battle of Gallipoli, 1915

Overview of the Battle of Gallipoli

By 1915 of World War I the belligerents on the Western Front were stuck in the bloody quagmire of trench warfare. Hoping to find another solution to ending the war sooner rather than later, the British decided to mount a naval campaign against the Ottomans at the Dardanelles. If they could capture the Turkish Straits they could resupply their ally Russia by going up the Straits and into the Black Sea. At the same time they could seize Istanbul (called Constantinople by the British) and knock the Ottomans out of the war.

On March 18th the Ottomans decisively repulsed the naval invasion of British and French ships. The British and French then decided to mount an amphibious landing of the Gallipoli Peninsula, bordering the Dardanelles, the first amphibious campaign in modern times. The landings took place on April 25, 1915. The goal was to move inland and seize the high ground. Australian and New Zealand troops landed on what would become known as Anzac Cove (Ari Burnu), an impossibly narrow beach fronted by high cliffs. Nonetheless the Anzacs made headway towards the highest points inland. Mustafa Kemal, later known as Atatürk, helped to push Anzac troops back to their beachheads. Other key beachheads were established on the southern tip of the peninsula, at Cape Helles. In May 1915 the Ottomans, under the overall command of German Otto von Sanders, mounted a counteroffensive to push the invaders into the sea. It failed. On May, 24 1915 a truce was called to bury the dead. In August 1915 France and Britain mounted a counter offensive to seize the high ground once again. It also failed. In October Ian Hamilton, Commander of the Mediterranean Expeditionary Forces, was recalled to London. He was replaced by Charles Munro who oversaw the withdrawal of British and French troops in December, 1915.

Directions: Read the two or more primary source documents assigned to you. For each document, fill in one Document Analysis Chart. Start by filling in the author’s name of the document you read. Underneath each category 1 through 5 write in your answers based on a careful reading of the documents. Look up any words in the document that are unfamiliar to you and write the definition in the margins.

Use the following two timelines to put the primary source documents into historical context. When was it written? What events during which month of 1915 is it describing? In other words, look at the date including the month your document describes and find it on one of the timelines. What is happening on the battlefield, or in the larger context of World War I?
Lesson Plan: The Battle of Gallipoli: Comparing Primary Sources

- Turkey’s War by Turkish Professor Dr. Altay Atlı [http://www.turkeyswar.com/chronology.html](http://www.turkeyswar.com/chronology.html)

### Document Analysis Chart

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<td>Nationality</td>
<td>Type of document</td>
<td>First hand</td>
<td>What information, in which other documents, is either confirmed or contradicted?</td>
<td>What valuable information can historians learn from this source?</td>
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<td>Role or rank</td>
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Lesson Plan: The Battle of Gallipoli: Comparing Primary Sources
Handout 2: Historical Inquiry Broadcast

Directions:
In your group of three you will prepare a Historical Inquiry Broadcast. Follow your teacher’s directions as to what technology (or not) you will use for your Broadcast.

Prepare the following:

As a group, chose one of the documents you analyzed. Be prepared to discuss how you will compare this document to one other document. How does the second one shed light on the first? Also research and choose a photograph to display as a backdrop to that document. The photograph should relate to the Battle of Gallipoli and in some way illustrate your primary source. Be sure to record the source of the photograph you use. Each person in your group has one of the following roles which will include:

- Student 1 should prepare the background information necessary for a listener to understand the document. Aim for no more than 75 words.
  - Who is the author? Include: nationality, role, reason for writing it, type of written work.
  - When was it written in relation to the events it recounts?
- Student 2 should prepare an oral reading of all of the first document, or a section of it. It should take no more than two minutes to read, and be no longer than 350 words long. Student 2 is also the person most responsible for finding an appropriate photograph to put on display while the document is being read.
- Student 3 should describe the second source and include in his or her statement what the group learned by comparing the first document to the second. Look over your Document Analysis Charts for ideas. Aim for a commentary of no more than 100 words.
- Rehearse your Historical Inquiry Broadcast and deliver it to the class. The photograph you choose should be the backdrop. Student 1 should read the introduction, Student 2 the document, and Student 3 make the comparison. If you make a recording (Podcast, slide show, film) consider adding historical music to it.

Some sources for photographs:

Twenty Remarkable Photos From Gallipoli, Imperial War Museum, UK at [http://www.iwm.org.uk/history/20-remarkable-photos-from-gallipoli](http://www.iwm.org.uk/history/20-remarkable-photos-from-gallipoli)


Turkey’s War [http://www.turkeyswar.com/campaigns/gallipoli.html](http://www.turkeyswar.com/campaigns/gallipoli.html)
Handout 3 Primary Sources

The Second Despatch[sic] of General Sir Ian Hamilton

Hamilton was British Commander in Chief of the Mediterranean Expeditionary Force. British Commanders-in-Chief of a campaign were required to report their activities to the War Office in the form of a dispatch. This dispatch was printed in the Supplement to the London Gazette of 20 September 1915. The Dispatch dealt with the Gallipoli fighting of May and June 1915.

To the Secretary of State for War, War Office, London, S.W.


My Lord,
By 11 a.m. the enemy, who were crowded together in the trenches beyond Quinn's Post, were giving way under their heavy losses. According to prisoners' reports 30,000 troops, including five fresh regiments, were used against us. [German] General Liman Von Sanders was himself in command. The enemy's casualties were heavy, as may be judged from the fact that over 3,000 dead were lying in the open in view of our trenches. A large proportion of these losses were due to our artillery fire. Our casualties amounted to about 100 killed and 500 wounded, including 9 officers wounded. …. the Turks seemed anxious to bury their dead, and … human sentiment and medical science were both of one accord in favour of such a course.

The next four days were chiefly remarkable for the carrying through of the negotiations for the suspension of arms, which actually took place on 24th May…About 5 p.m. on 20th May white flags and Red Crescents [Ottoman Red Cross] began to appear all along the line… … The negotiations resulted in a suspension of arms from 7.30 a.m. to 4.30 p.m. on 24th May. The procedure laid down for this suspension of arms was, I am glad to inform your Lordship, correctly observed on both sides. The burial of the dead was finished about 3 p.m. Some 3,000 Turkish dead were removed or buried in the area between the opposing lines. The whole of these were killed on or since the 18th of May. Many bodies of men killed earlier were also buried.

…During the whole period under review the efforts and expedients whereby a great army has had its wants supplied upon a wilderness have, I believe, been breaking world records. The
country [terrain] is broken, mountainous, arid and void of supplies; the water found in the areas occupied by our forces is quite inadequate for their needs; the only practicable beaches are small, cramped breaks in impracticable lines of cliffs; with the wind in certain quarters no sort of landing is possible; the wastage, by bombardment and wreckage, of lighters and small craft has led to crisis after crisis in our carrying capacity, whilst over every single beach plays fitfully throughout each day a devastating shell fire at medium ranges…. But the Navy and the Royal Engineers were not to be thwarted in their landing operations either by nature or by the enemy, whilst the Army Service Corps, under Brigadier-General F. W. B. Koe, and the Army Ordnance Corps, under Brigadier-General R. W. M. Jackson, have made it a point of honour to feed men, animals, guns and rifles in the fighting line as regularly as if they were only out for manoeuvres on Salisbury Plain….

I have the honour to be
Your Lordship's most obedient Servant,
IAN HAMILTON, General, Commanding Mediterranean Expeditionary Force

To see the document as published in the British Gazette go to https://www.thegazette.co.uk/London/issue/29303/supplement/9320


Letter of Trooper Gordon Gerald Harper


The Gallipoli Peninsula
The Trenches
15th May, 1915

Dearest Mother,

…On May 24th we witnessed one of the most unique sights of the war — an eight hours’ armistice. The closeness of the contending lines and the ceaseless firing of so many weeks had made it impossible for burying parties to work anywhere except in the rear of the trenches only, and the position, more especially of the Turks, was become acute. At the appointed hour on Monday morning the rattle of fire, which had not known a lull for three weeks, stopped as if by magic, producing a marked sensational effect on everything. And then slowly, a white flag first, crept the men of either side from their trenches, and gradually along the whole line of sand-bag parapets stood a long line of Colonials [British and French colonial troops] facing intently across the gully at the coloured row of Turks, while between them, at last to full view, the scattered prostrate forms of the fallen.
Burying parties were soon out, and the Red Cross mixed with the [Ottoman] Red Crescent, each seeking his own dead. It took all day to complete the task of burying 3,000 dead, and the identification disc alone made sure of the fate of many a missing one who, for three weeks, had lain without a grave. It was thus that the bodies of Lionel Parson and Fred Johnson were found, quite close together, near the Turkish trenches…

Ever your loving son, Gordon

Letter of Lieutenant James Gordon Jeffrey

Letter of Lieutenant James Gordon Jeffrey, New Zealand Field Artillery to his family

Anzac Bay
Gallipoli Peninsula
Thursday 27th May 1915

…We had an armistice here on Monday from 7.30 a.m. until 4.30 p.m. to enable both sides to bury their dead. This was necessary following an engagement which we had on the 19th when we gave the enemy an awful drubbing. The attack was a very determined one, their intention being, as we have learnt from prisoners, to ‘drive us into the sea.’ Needless to say they didn’t do it. Our losses were very small, but the Turks it is estimated, lost about 7000 killed and wounded. While the armistice was on one could roam about quite freely — quite a change I can assure you from our otherwise very cramped life here, for at present no one moves about more than is absolutely necessary, it being rather risky to expose oneself unnecessarily… I had a good look around during our few hours of ‘peace’…Personally I think they will get rather tired of this war soon, and sue for peace…


Alfred Cameron’s War Diary
This is the last page from Alfred Cameron’s Gallipoli war diary... Cameron sailed from New Zealand to Egypt in October 1914. On May 12, 1915 he landed at Gallipoli where he saw action against the Turks. The diary covers August 13, 1914 to May 1915. Below is a transcript of Alfred Cameron's last diary entry.

Anyday.
It’s just hell here now no water or tucker only 7 out of 33 in no 1 troop on duty not either dead or wound. Dam the place no good writing any more.
My cobber dead. Killed August 7th. bullet through head. buried Taylors Hollow.

Note: “tucker” is slang for “food” and “cobber” for “friend.”


Mehmed Fasih’s Diary, Two Excerpts

Excerpts from the diary of Mehmed Fasih, Second Lieutenant, Ottoman Fifth Army. Fasih served in the Anzac sector (Arı Burnu in Turkish).

October 27, 1915

....the Captain and I go to inspect damage to our trenches. Machine-gun emplacement (where Mahmud Can was hurt) is below ground at the end of a path. The gun is fired from a narrow slit facing the enemy. As if tossed in by hand, an enemy shell penetrated the position from this aperture. The carnage it caused is awful. Six dead lie there. Dismembered, parts of their bodies are intermingled. Blood has drained out of bodies, and chests and arms look like wax. Shins and
legs, seared by the explosion, are purple. Some bones have been stripped of flesh. The men’s features are unrecognizable. Pitch black...

(At this point Mehmed Fasih quotes a poem in Ottoman Turkish. A free translation of the verses is offered below.)

Graves, graves...lie open throughout the World,
Lightning has blighted the rose gardens,
Soldiers, soldiers...have become corpses,
Heroes are now carrion for wild beasts.

....As I write this in my diary, relight and smoke tobacco remaining in my water-pipe, and drink up what was left of my coffee when the shelling started. But the horror of what I saw remains before my eyes.

November 17, 1915

Would love to see those who claim, "Soldiering is an easy profession and the military are over-paid!" spend one night sleeping in ice mud. Would they ever repeat that statement? I don’t believe so. I'm 21-years old. My hair and beard are already grey. My moustache is white. My face is wrinkled and my body is rotting. I can’t anymore endure the hardships and privations we face without being upset. Being an Ottoman Officer only means putting up with grenades and bombs. 19.00 hrs: My captain and Faik take advantage of a slight let-up in the rain to leave. It is pouring. The valley is blanketed with fog. Illuminato (Faik) has to move out of his dug-out because of flooding. I am sitting cross-legged on my bed as I work on my diary. 19.30 hrs: Rain has stopped. But the sky is still overcast. Wind has somewhat abated. Sounds of infantry and machine gun fire reach us. Meanwhile, Illuminato and I chat. The poor fellow can only talk about promotion and how fed up he is with the war. And I can’t stand that. Constant chatter about the same subjects is unendurable. Like me, he should be more philosophical about such matters. Tomorrow, it will be my Company’s turn.

Sources:
First quotation
http://cmes.arizona.edu/sites/cmes.arizona.edu/files/4.%20Documents%20-%20diaries%20and%20memoirs.pdf

Second Quotation
http://www.gallipoli-association.org/on-this-day/november-17
Mustafa Kemal Recounts the Landings of the Anzacs

In 1918 Mustafa Kemal (later known as Atatürk) recounted his memories of April 25 on Ariburnu beach [later known as Anzac Cove]. He was in charge of the 19th Division of Ottoman Troops at Gallipoli.

I was expecting landings around Kaba Tepe when I heard warships bombing around Ariburnu. It was 6:30 in the morning, a report was received that indicated the enemy [Anzacs] was climbing up the hills behind Ariburnu. I was requested to provide a battalion to counter the enemy. I suspected that this would be a major landing and my Division would be needed rather than a battalion to match the enemy. …

We finally managed to get to this hill which is the highest on the peninsula. However, Ariburnu was in a blind spot and could not be seen, so I could only observe many boats and warships at sea. I asked the regiment to have a rest and I walked towards Conkbariri [Chanuk Bair] with the regimental doctor, the commander of the battery and my lieutenant. As we got there, we saw a group of soldiers running towards us from the Hill 261 [southern shoulder of Chunuk Bair]. I stopped them and asked them why they were running and they said, “Sir, the enemy!” and showed a small band of soldiers following them at a distance. Can you imagine, the enemy was closer to me than my troops which I had left behind. I shouted, ‘You can’t run away from the enemy!’ They said they had no bullets left and I replied, ‘If you have no ammunition you have your bayonets and ordered them to fix bayonets and face the enemy. Upon this action, the enemy soldiers also laid down. In the mean time I asked my lieutenant to urgently bring the regiment’s soldiers to this post. Pretty soon, the first company arrived… By 11:30 a.m. the enemy was in retreat.’

As quoted in Kevin Fewster Kevin Fewster, Vecihi Basarin and Hatice Hurmuz Basarin, Gallipoli: The Turkish Story (Crows Nest Australia: 2003), 66-67.

Major Zeki Bey Remembers the Anzac Landings of April 25, 1915

Zeki Bey was responsible for leading the attack of his battalion against the Anzacs on the morning of April 25th. When Australian historian C.E.W. Bean came to research the battlefield in 1919 he interviewed Zeki Bey.

The regiment assembled when the order came. Mustafa Kemal ordered the regiment and a battery of artillery mountain guns to intercept the English [Anzacs] who had landed. He reasoned, if this force has gone in the direction of Koja Chimen Tepi (Hill 971) the landing is not a mere demonstration, it is the real thing, the landing of the main force. For that reason he took, not one battalion as the commander of the 9th division had asked, but the whole regiment. They
went at once straight across the country towards the summit of Koja Chimen Tepe towards Chunuk Bair, Kemal himself leading.


Irfan Orga: From Portrait of a Turkish Family

*Irfan Orga grew up in Istanbul. During World War I Orga’s once-prosperous family slid inexorably into destitution. In this excerpt from his memoirs he recounts his experience as a young boy. He published them in English in London in 1950.

‘Ali Bey!’ [my mother] cried to one of the officers and he saluted her, going red with some sort of emotion that I should never know, and I looked at him curiously, wondering who he might be and how my mother knew him.

She asked eagerly for news of my father and he looked uncertainly at her as though perhaps weighing up her capabilities for shock, and he said slowly:

‘We left him to his God a long time ago — ‘ and paused wondering what else there was to say to her.

Although her face was whiter than I had ever seen it in my life, she said with swift impatience:

‘Yes? Go on! I want to know whatever it is you have to tell me.’

Then the man called Ali, who was a captain, plunged into the conversation to tell her this story.

On the march to the Dardanelles my father had suffered badly from foot trouble. He had to march day and night, night and day, and his feet began to swell and in the end they had to cut his torn boots off him. The two feet were found to be badly infected right up to the ankles and soaked in fresh bright blood. He had been left by the roadside, as was the custom, and they had called back down the lines that a wounded man lay under a tree. And eventually this message would reach the end of the marching lines where a horse-drawn cart lumbered for the express purpose of picking up the sick and wounded. But if the cart was already full to overflowing with all the other sick soldiers who had dropped out on the way? Ah well— in that case a man just lay by the side of the road under the blazing sun and waited for the next lot of marching soldiers to take up the same old cry, that a man lay wounded under the trees by the side of an alien road. Down, down the weary lines the cry would go, but perhaps by the time the sick-cart reached the spot a man would be dead and there was not much point in carrying a dead man — when there were so many living who still might be saved. But of course, Captain Ali hastened to assure my mother my father was picked up and taken to a Base hospital — where he died.

… She took my hand and we began the long trudge back to the station. She did not speak to me at all but walked as if mechanically propelled, never slackening or altering her pace, although my small legs were breaking under me.

**Halide Edip Adıvar from *The Memories of Halide Edip Adıvar***

_This excerpt is from the memoirs of a self-educated woman, Halide Edip Adıvar. She was a nationalist, novelist and activist. She was in her thirties during the Battle of Gallipoli._

The terrific defense of Gallipoli was the first great event of the World War in Turkey. I will not speak of its almost superhuman heroism and sacrifice. For me, all the honor is due to the common Turkish soldier whose name no one knows and who cannot appear in moving pictures as the hero of the day. Mr. Masefield's book, "Gallipoli," makes one realize the great human and great war material which such a nation as the British has lost, and it makes one realize at the same time the fighting value of the Turkish army which could successfully defend Gallipoli against the allied forces and fleets. There was a keen sense in the men of defending the gates to the main Turkish lands; there was a more than keen sense of fighting against the Russian hallucination projected in their brains by the allied forces. With the allied attack on the Dardanelles, many families once more left Constantinople, and I had to send my children away to Broussa.

It was about the time of the great battle of March 5 that Youssouf Akchura invited the nationalist writers to gather in the offices of "Turk Yourdu" and seriously discuss their future plans if the Allies should force the straits and enter Constantinople. They were to decide in case of such disaster whether they were to stay on in Constantinople and go on keeping the ideals of nationalism in the hearts of the people or pass on and work in safer and more favorable lands.

Accessed online at [https://archive.org/stream/memoirsofhalide00haliuoft/memoirsofhalide00haliuoft_djvu.txt](https://archive.org/stream/memoirsofhalide00haliuoft/memoirsofhalide00haliuoft_djvu.txt)

**Ihsan Turjman, Ottoman Victories in Dardanelles**

Monday, January 10, 1916
[Jerusalem]

_Ihsan Turjman was a resident of Jerusalem, a private in the Ottoman army working in the Commissariat when he kept a diary in Arabic from which this excerpt is extracted._
Lesson Plan: The Battle of Gallipoli: Comparing Primary Sources

Last evening a telegraph was received [by the Commissariat] from Cemal Pasha, commander of the Fourth Army indicating that our English and French enemies have retreated toward the south. All departments were to take the day off in celebration today, Monday. Sweets are to be distributed to all soldiers. All shops and public places are to be lit — except for coastal facilities [which have to stay on alert]. I said to myself, “Every time we celebrate a victory we face a disaster a few days later.”

I had hardly recorded that thought when news arrived of the following: battleships arrived in Haifa a few days ago and bombarded the German Colony [a neighborhood of Haifa]. The whole neighborhood was deserted…”


Dardanelles Commission Report: Conclusions 2 & 9

The British Parliament investigated the Battle of Gallipoli after the battle was over, but before World War I had ended. The report itself was not published until 1919.

Conclusion 2.

We think that the difficulties of the operations were much underestimated. At the outset all decisions were taken and all provisions based on the assumption that, if a landing were effected, the resistance would be slight and the advance rapid. We can see no sufficient ground for this assumption. The short naval bombardment in November, 1914, had given the Turks warning of a possible attack, and the naval operations in February and March of 1915 led naturally to a great strengthening of the Turkish defences. The Turks were known to be led by German officers, and there was no reason to think that they would not fight well, especially in defensive positions. These facts had been reported by Admiral de Robeck and Sir Ian Hamilton. ...

Conclusion 9.

As regards Sir Ian Hamilton it is inevitable that the capabilities of a commander in war should be judged by the results he achieves, even though, if these results are disappointing, his failure may be due to causes for which he is only partially responsible.

In April, 1915, Sir Ian Hamilton succeeded in landing his troops at the places which he had chosen: but the operations that were intended immediately to follow the landing were abruptly checked owing to a miscalculation of the strength of the Turkish defences and the fighting qualities of the Turkish troops. This rebuff should have convinced Sir Ian Hamilton that the Turkish entrenchments were skillfully disposed and well armed, and that naval gun fire was ineffective against trenches and entanglements of the modern type. We doubt, however, whether the failure of the operations sufficiently impressed Sir Ian Hamilton and the military authorities at home with the serious nature of the opposition likely to be encountered.

During May, June, and July severe fighting took place, but its results were not
commensurate with the efforts made and the losses incurred.

During July a plan of combined operations was elaborated, which was carried into effect early in August. Sir Ian Hamilton was confident of success, but was again baffled by the obstinacy of the Turkish resistance. Moreover, the failure of night advances in a difficult and unexplored country, which formed part of the plan, led to heavy casualties and temporarily disorganised the forces employed.

British National Archives
http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/pathways/firstworldwar/battles/p_dard_comm.htm

Otto Liman von Sanders Recalls the Anzac Front at Gallipoli

The German General von Sanders was in overall command of the Central Powers’ defense of Gallipoli. Essad Pasha was the highest ranking Ottoman. Here Sanders recounts the situation after the Allied landings at Anzac Cove.

The tools with which the two sides worked were sadly different. The enemy [British and French] controlled all the resources of the world and possessed the most modern war material, the poor Turks had few entrenching implements and frequently had to capture the tools for the construction of their fieldworks from the enemy. The wood and iron for the dugouts were collected from the destroyed villages. Not even sand bags could be procured in nearly sufficient quantity. When a few thousands of them arrived from Constantinople, there was danger of their being used by the troop leaders for patching the ragged uniforms of their men.

It was due solely to the stoic calmness of the Anatolian soldier and to his freedom from wants that all these difficulties were overcome on the front of Ariburnu [Anzac Cove], commanded by Essad Pasha. The much rent mountainous terrain afforded to the Turks better conditions for their field works than was the case on the South Front [Cape Helles]. Since the line of defense ran north and south, the [British] ships’ guns could fire in one direction only or at best at a slightly flaring angle. It was one of the reasons that on this front the enemy’s progress, in spite of all the bravery of the Australians and New Zealanders was limited so that in some places the British positions were but 800-1200 meters inland from the landing.